

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE COMMISSION ON FINE ARTS
HELD IN WASHINGTON, D. C., FEBRUARY 17, 1938.

The sixth meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1938, was held in its office in the Interior Department Building on Thursday, February 17, 1938. The following members were present:

Mr. Clarke, Chairman,
Mr. Shepley,
Mr. Lath,
Mr. Housh,ir,
also R. . Caeser,er,

Executive Secretary and Administrative Officer.

The meeting was called to order at 11:30 a. m.

Mr. Borie attended the afternoon session.

1. RELLOCATION OF THE BUTT-MILLET FOUNTAIN: Mr. Malcolm Kirkpatrick, Landscape Architect of the National Park Service, reported that it is proposed to widen E Street on the south side of the White House, which will necessitate relocating the Butt-Millet Memorial Fountain. The Commission considered the question of relocation. Mr. Clarke said that he thought the small triangle east of the Apex Building at the intersection of Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues might be suitable but that it appears there is sentiment for keeping the fountain near the White House in view of the fact that Major Butt at the time he perished in the Titanic disaster was Aide to President Taft.

After consideration the Commission decided that the location along 17th Street among the trees opposite the U. S. R. Building would be suitable and suggested that Mr. Kirkpatrick make a landscape plan with a view to placing the memorial in that locality.

2. REGRADING PART OF THE ROCK CREEK PARKWAY: Mr. Kirkpatrick presented photographs and a plan showing conditions in the Rock Creek Parkway where one

archway of the E Street Bridge had been obscured by a fill. He said, "I understand that in 1924 or 1925 after the bridge was completed, the Capital Traction Company, or whatever a company operated the old car line at 22nd and E Streets, N. W., extended their grounds before the Park Service and an opportunity to acquire the ground. They dumped a fill out beyond two arches of the E Street Bridge. On the other side of the bridge a real estate company controlled the land and dumped fill into the valley from the excavation for an apartment house project. The result is that when driving up the valley it is impossible to see the last arch; one does not know of the existence of that arch without getting almost parallel with the bridge. It is unfortunate to hide the bridge and furthermore the type of growth that has taken place on the hills is of a voluntary nature, dictated by the character of the soil. We could take these fills away and put in a finer and more appropriate type of planting."

"The same condition prevails further down near the Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge across the parkway. We had no money to build the roadway and the Park Service agreed to have it built by the District Commissioners as a Federal Aid Project. Adjustments to the slope which we thought were necessary were not made, however, and we would like very much to regrade the slope to make it less steep so as to give the parkway a better aspect."

Mr. Clarke agreed with Mr. Kirkpatrick that the slope is too steep and that it cannot be suitably developed until better grade relationships are established.

The Commission approved the suggested regrading and a report was sent to the Director of the National Park Service accordingly. (Exhibit A)

3. RESTAURANT AT FIRST AND D STREETS, N. E.: Under date of February 14, 1938, the following letter was received from Mr. L. W. Dreyfuss, submitting a

revised design for a one-story restaurant building to be erected at First and D Streets, N. E.

The Commission considered the design and thought the suggestion to use limestone decidedly improved the appearance of the building. Mr. Shenley pointed out that Mr. Dreyfuss had changed the pier spacing and asked him what relation this design had to a proposed future addition to the building. Mr. Dreyfuss replied that this one-story structure would have to be torn down whenever the owner proposes to build as high as the adjacent hotel building; therefore, this is in the nature of a temporary building. He called attention to a perspective of the proposed hotel building designed some years ago, but of which only a part had been built. A new building on the corner would have to be designed so as to be in harmony with the existing building. The Commission thought the design for the one-story corner building satisfactory and approved it.

Thereupon Mr. Dreyfuss brought up the question of an advertising sign on the building. He was informed of the regulation of the Commission limiting advertising signs within the Shipstead-Luce Act area to 25 square feet. Mr. Dreyfuss said the owner wants a small neon sign on the marquee at the corner, the sign to bear the word, "Cafe". The Commission felt there would be no objection to this provided no red neon letters were used, the preferable color being green or gold. Mr. Dreyfuss then asked that he be permitted to place bronze letters on the parapet of the two sides, spelling "Plaza Restaurant". Mr. Lamb and Mr. Shenley felt that such a large sign in bronze letters near the Union Station would be out of proportion to the rest of the building, although if the letters were carved into the stone the signs might not be so objectionable.

The Commission decided that the question of advertising sign for the building be deferred until such time as the final drawings are submitted. A letter of approval was sent to Mr. Dreyfuss. (Exhibit B)

4. EXTENSION TO NAVY DEPARTMENT BUILDING: The following letter was received from Commander I. P. Griffin of the Navy Department, submitting a design for an additional story on the Navy Department Building:

February 8, 1938.

My dear Mr. Caemmerer:

In view of the fact that the Navy finds itself in need of more space, especially at this time with the prospect of increased activity, the Secretary of the Navy has proposed to the Secretary of the Interior that space can be most economically provided by the addition of a fourth story on one of the wings of the Navy Building.

Realizing that this proposition is subject to the approval of your Commission as well as that of the National Parks and Planning Commission and being desirous of obtaining immediate results by including the project, if possible, in the Second Deficiency Bill, I am presenting the details of the project to you by letter, in the hope that you will be able to secure quicker action than by waiting to present them at one of your regular meetings. This action on my part is with the approval of the National Park Service.

There are inclosed two blueprints, rough sketches of the construction proposed. One shows an elevation of the side of the building with a diagram indicating that the addition cannot be readily seen from the ground. The other indicates roughly the character of construction. In presenting it for the approval of the Fine Arts Commission, we wish to call particular attention to the fact that the roof of the addition will only be 3 feet 2 inches higher than the exterior parapet of the present building and, therefore, will be practically hidden from view. It can, of course, be seen from the upper windows of other buildings in the vicinity, but it is proposed that the exterior will be finished with stucco, will harmonize generally with the rest of the building, and will not be objectionable in appearance. The sketch shows additions to two wings, but the Navy is proposing the construction of only one at present and probably will not require the second one.

It will be appreciated if you will keep me advised as to the progress made in the consideration of this project.

Respectfully,
(Signed) Ira P. Griffen,
Comdr. I. P. Griffen, (CRC), USN.,
Navy Dept. Space Representative.

Copies of the designs together with letter had been sent to the architect members of the Commission for consideration prior to the meeting. The secretary reported that he had received a letter from Mr. Borie endorsing the scheme, as follows:

"In answering your letter of the 10th, enclosing me data concerning the proposed additional fourth story building to be erected on one of the wings of the Navy Building, I am entirely in favor of this and trust it will prove to be as conspicuous and disfiguring as possible. This, I believe, will hasten the entire elimination of all this Navy Department Group.

"From the drawings, it is indicated that this condition will not be particularly visible from the Constitution Avenue side, but, of course, from the south side towards the Mall, it will be very conspicuous and I trust, annoying."

Commander Griffin was present to explain the scheme. He pointed out that the Navy must have additional room and that this scheme would seem more economical than to rent quarters. Mr. Repley and Mr. Lobb interposed no objection to the extension, with the understanding that it is to be considered a temporary thing. A report approving the design was sent to Commander Griffin. (Exhibit C)

After hearing from Commander Griffin Mr. Clarke asked concerning the status of the proposed War and Navy Building. The secretary reported that a bill is pending for a new War Department Building to be bounded by 21st, 23rd, C and E Streets, N. E. It is to cost \$26,000,000, but no action has been taken by Congress so far in the matter. With respect to a new Navy Department Building the secretary stated that about a year ago he attended a conference at one of a group at the White House Office, during which conference the President stated that it was his desire to have the temporary War and Navy Buildings torn down as soon as possible and that he would like to see a War Department Building erected in the vicinity of New York Avenue west of 10th Street and a new Navy Department Building along the water front.

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It was pointed out that Congress had authorized the relocation of the Naval Hospital and removal of the old hospital will doubtless give additional ground for the new War and Navy Buildings in this locality.

5. FLEET MARINE CORPS RESERVE MEDAL: Under date of February 7, 1938, a letter of transmittal was received from Col. W. P. Upshur of the Marine Corps, submitting a model for the Fleet Marine Corps Reserve Medal designed by John R. Simnock of Philadelphia. The model was submitted to Mr. Manship for comment and he advised that he considered it satisfactory. Upon his recommendation, the Commission approved the model. (Exhibit D)

6. MONUMENT TO GENERAL PETER MUHLENBERG: Under date of February 9, 1938, the following letter was received from Hon. A. Willis Robertson, House of Representatives, requesting advice in regard to procedure in erecting a monument to General Peter Muhlenberg at Woodstock, Virginia:

February 9, 1938.

Dear Mr. Clarke:

I enclose letter from my friend and constituent, Mr. E. E. Keister, of Strasburg, Virginia, concerning the erection of a monument or shrine to General Muhlenberg at Woodstock, Virginia. I feel sure that your Commission will be interested in this project and will be willing to give me the benefit of your advice and guidance. Frankly, I would not know whether to introduce a bill to provide for a monument or a shrine, or what amount of money should be authorized for its construction. If your Commission would prepare a suitable bill for me I would greatly appreciate it. Otherwise please advise me what I should do.

Cordially yours,
(Signed) A. Willis Robertson.

Mr. Clarke asked the secretary for historical information concerning General Muhlenberg and he related the following: Peter Muhlenberg was born in Pennsylvania and was educated abroad where he studied for the ministry and was ordained by the Church of England. He received military training in the Royal American Militia. His two brothers were distinguished, one being the first Speaker

of the House of Representatives and the other a botanist. At the opening of the Revolutionary War Muhlenberg, who was a friend of George Washington, was serving a congregation at Woodstock, Virginia. At the time Washington was recruiting his army and Muhlenberg determined to raise a regiment. One Sunday, dressed in an officer's uniform with a clergyman's garb over it, he delivered his sermon, closing with these words: "There is a time to pray, a time to preach and a time to fight and that time has now come." Throwing off his clergyman's garb he stepped from behind the pulpit and called for volunteers. Muhlenberg was cited for conspicuous service during the Revolutionary War. He was with Washington at Valley Forge and also had a prominent part in the Siege of Yorktown.

Mr. Clarke read the draft of a bill, which the Commission considered satisfactory. The amount of the appropriation was left blank as the Commission felt that not much less than \$50,000, which was the amount Harvard University appropriated for the General Armas and Statue, should be made available for this monument. A letter was sent to Representative Robertson accordingly. (Exhibit E) (See also E-1)

7. PAINTING OF CHAIN BRIDGE: Mr. Clarke said that under date of February 5, 1938, he had received the following letter from Col. Sultan about the paint for Chain Bridge:

February 5, 1938.

My dear Major Clarke:

You left rather hurriedly on Thursday afternoon at the joint meeting of the Fine Arts Commission and the Park and Planning Commission before I got a chance to ask your advice on a matter in connection with the new Chain Bridge. The steel erection is progressing rapidly and I enclose a photograph which will give you an indication of the general appearance of the structure as it exists at the present time and without the railing. I should very much appreciate it if you would give me the benefit of your advice as to the proper color to

paint the bridge. The suggestion has been made that it be painted with aluminum paint and others have suggested a green shade. Personally I am willing to follow your thought.

Mr. Clarke said that the Commission had approved the design for Chain Bridge, which indicated a very simple, utilitarian steel cantilever girder construction; and now Col. Sultan has asked about the paint and suggests aluminum. The Commission strongly objected to aluminum paint. Mr. Clarke said that he had sent Col. Sultan a sample of a gray-green color made by DuPont, which has been used on the West Side in New York City for the lamp posts, and that he felt this would be an unobtrusive color. The Commission concurred in this suggested color. (Exhibit F)

8. FREER GALLERY OF ART FENCE: The secretary reported that a number of years ago Mr. Platt had designed a picket fence to surround the Freer Gallery grounds. The fence was not built but a wire one has been strung which Mr. Lodge wants removed. Nothing was done about Mr. Clarke's suggestions made in 1932, but now Mr. Lodge wants a specific recommendation from the Commission with respect to the fence.

The Commission decided that it would be inappropriate to erect a picket fence as was contemplated by Mr. Platt. Mr. Clarke said that what should be done is to plant a hedge about 2 1/2 feet high and four feet wide, using a prickly material, with possibly an iron picket fence in the center, if necessary. The Commission felt that this would be a proper solution of the problem and suggested that the Chairman take up the matter with Mr. Lodge.

9. GREAT ENTRANCE TO ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY: Mr. Clarke reported that last Sunday (the 13th) when he and Mr. Manship attended a reception at the White House, Mr. F. A. Delano complained to him about the appearance of the Great Entrance to Arlington.

The Commission agreed that there is too much exposed granite there and that its appearance could be considerably improved by letting vines screen the masonry with the exception of the niche. A letter was sent to the Director of the National Park Service suggesting that vines be planted accordingly.

(Exhibit G)

10. STATUE OF LIBERTY: Mr. Thomas C. Vint, Chief Architect of the National Park Service, brought to the attention of the Commission progress studies for repair work on the Statue of Liberty in New York City and for improving the grounds, which work he said the National Park Service intends to do as part of the New York World's Fair project. The statue stands on an old star fort and around the statue are old buildings erected as far back as 1650 that are now unsightly.

Mr. Clarke pointed out features of the general plan, which the Commission had approved heretofore, such as a new sea wall, relocation of the landing place for visitors, relocation of the flagpole, the scheme to tear down the old buildings around the statue, and certain changes to be made in the pedestal. Under the new scheme there will be only grass and clipped trees around it. The plan is so designed that not only visitors approaching the statue from Battery Park but also trans-Atlantic passengers will be able to obtain a good view of it.

Mr. Vint explained in detail certain features of the proposed changes to be made in the pedestal. Among other things the base is to be made water-proof. The present narrow stairway from the first floor to the second will be replaced by a new stairway of convenient size to accommodate the large crowds of visitors. Certain changes are to be made in walls within the pedestal. Mr. Clarke suggested using sand blasted undressed lumber for interior finishes.

The Commission were satisfied with the drawings made thus far. Mr. Vint said he would present more complete studies at the next meeting.

11. GEORGE M. COHAN MEDAL: The following letter, dated February 17, was received from the Director of the Mint, submitting the model for the George M. Cohan Medal:

Dear Mr. Clarke:

Reference is made to your letter of January 14th, in which you request that the model made from the sketch for the Cohan medal be sent to you.

The model has reached the Bureau this morning and is being forwarded in response to your desire to see it.

Very truly yours,
(Signed) Nellie Tayloe Ross,
Director of the Mint.

Mr. Marship said he had seen the model in New York and upon his recommendation the Commission approved it. (Exhibit H)

12. JEFFERSON MEMORIAL: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission having invited the members of the Commission of Fine Arts to attend a meeting at the Old House Office Building, arrangements were made to attend the meeting at 3:00 p. m. Just prior to the meeting a trip of inspection was made to the site of the proposed memorial on the south bank of the Tidal Basin on the axis of 18th Street. The Commission felt that at this location the semi-circular colonnade scheme with statue in the center could be made a very fitting memorial to Thomas Jefferson. At the meeting Mr. Clarke, Mr. Borie, Mr. Sherler, Mr. Lamb and Mr. Marship all spoke in favor of the semi-circular colonnade and the following points were made:

1. It would avoid a duplication of the pantheon type of the University of Virginia Library.
2. It would be a memorial unlike anything in Washington.
3. The memorial would be given a suitable landscape setting and it would not be subject to further encroachment by public buildings.

4. The memorial would interfere very little with existing cherry trees along the Tidal Basin.

5. The memorial on the axis of 15th Street would be in relation to the plan of Washington and would recognize Thomas Jefferson's work in cooperation with George Washington to develop the National Capital in the early days of the Republic.

6. The memorial would furnish a charming view as seen from across the Tidal Basin.

7. The memorial could be built within the \$3,000,000 that has been authorized by Congress.

Mr. Eggers of the former office of John Russell Pope presented an improved design for a semi-circular colonnade scheme, showing a colonnade about 300 feet in length, flanking a statue of Jefferson in the center to be 30 feet high on a pedestal 20 feet high. The columns would be 35 feet high, mounted on a base 14 feet high from grade. The colonnades would be 395 feet apart.

After consideration the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission went into executive session. The members of the Commission of Fine Arts were informed later that at this executive session the Jefferson Memorial Commission decided in the interest of harmony to accept the semi-circular colonnade scheme which had been recommended by the Commission of Fine Arts but that they also decided to submit the question of design to President Roosevelt for final determination.

The Commission adjourned at 5:00 p. m.

February 17, 1935.

Dear Mr. Cammerer:

The Branch of Plans and Design presented to the Commission of Fine Arts cross sections and photographs showing prevailing conditions and proposed regrading of the following areas: 1. Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway: the embankment west of the driveway in Section II, the upper level above the creek valley along the eastern boundary of Section II; the west embankment of Rock Creek between the "P" and "Q" Street Bridges and north of the C Street Bridge in Section III of the Parkway.

The Commission of Fine Arts believe that the proposed regrading will pave the way for a finer development of these areas than the present topography permits. The existing slope west of the drive in Section II is now too steep for a pleasing treatment of the valley and the area along the east boundary cannot be developed suitably for park usage until better grade relationships are established.

The Commission are particularly hopeful that the objectionable fills at the west abutment of the Q Street Bridge can be removed in accordance with your proposal.

The loss of volunteer growth of weed trees which will be necessitated by these grading operations will be more than offset by the general improvement.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very truly yours,
(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,
Chairman.

Hon. A. B. Cammerer, Director,
National Park Service,
Interior Department,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT A

C O P Y

February 19, 1938.

Dear Mr. Dreyfuss:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting on February 17, 1938, approved the revised design which you submitted for a one-story restaurant building, at the corner of First and D Streets, Northeast, adjacent to the Plaza Hotel and to Union Station Plaza. The Commission noted that the two facades are to be in limestone with bullhead and spandrels of Alberene stone and mouldings of stainless steel, and that limestone piers will be carried down between the plate glass windows.

The Commission understand that, whenever the owner proposes to build to the height of the Plaza Hotel proper, he will have a new design made for the corner building to harmonize with the adjacent existing hotel building.

In the matter of advertising signs, the Commission of Fine Arts have adopted a regulation limiting signs within the Stripstead-Luce Act area to the size of 25 square feet. The Commission advise that the question of signs be taken up when the final drawings are submitted.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Yours very truly,

(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,

Chairman.

Mr. Edmund W. Dreyfuss,
1528 K Street, N. W.,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT B

C O P Y

February 17, 1938.

Dear Commander Griffen:

The Commission of Fine Arts have given consideration to the subject of your letter of February 8th, concerning the addition of vent houses on wings two and three of the temporary Navy Department building on Constitution Avenue. The Commission raise no objection to this addition, realizing that it is important that the Navy Department have additional space immediately.

The Commission are hopeful that both the temporary Navy and Munitions buildings may be removed from the Mall immediately upon the completion of permanent buildings for the War and Navy Departments.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very respectfully, yours,

(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,

Chairman.

Commander I. F. Griffen (CEC), USN.,
Navy Department,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT C

C O P Y

February 17, 1938.

Dear Colonel Upshur:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on February 17, 1938, approved the model by John R. Innocent, which you submitted with your letter of February 7, for the proposed Fleet Marine Corps Reserve Medal.

The model is returned to you herewith.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very truly yours,

(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,

Chairman.

Colonel W. P. Upshur,
Director, Marine Corps Reserve,
Headquarters U. S. Marine Corps,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT D

C O P Y

February 17, 1938.

Dear Mr. Robertson:

I have received your letter of February 8th, with its enclosure of one addressed to you by Mr. E. Keister, of Strasburg, Virginia, concerning the erection of a monument or shrine to General Bullenbergh at Woodstock, Virginia. I can assure you that the Commission of Fine Arts would give such assistance as is possible if Congress should decide to enact legislation for this memorial. Enclosed is the draft of a bill which I think would be suitable. The item of cost has been omitted since it is difficult to anticipate just what a suitable monument would cost.

In addition to the cost of the memorial itself, sufficient funds should be appropriated to afford adequate treatment of the grounds around the monument. It would appear from past experience in similar matters that a sum of not much less than \$10,000 would be about a minimum for the memorial and its setting.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Gilmore W. Clarke,

Chairman.

Hon. A. Willis Robertson,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT E

C O P Y

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

February 13, 1937.

Hon. Gilmore D. Clarke, Chairman,
The Commission of Fine Arts,
Interior Department Building,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Clarke:

Thanks for your letter of the 17th with which you enclose
a proposed draft of a bill to provide at Woodstock, Virginia, a
monument or statue to General Muhlenberg. I intend to proceed along
the lines you suggest.

Cordially yours,

(Signed) A. Willis Robertson.

EXHIBIT E-1

County Office Building,
White Plains, N. Y.
February 14, 1939.

Colonel Dan I. Sultan,
Corps of Engineers, U. S. Army,
Engineer Commissioner,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Colonel Sultan:

The photograph you sent me of the Chain Bridge indicated that excellent progress has been made in the reconstruction work. My suggestion would be that you adopt a grey green as the final color for the steel on this structure. On the West Side improvement in New York City, I have adopted a green that has met with approval by the majority of those whom I have talked to in authority. The paint we use is DuPont's DuLux #2-295. This is an excellent preservative as well as being a good color.

I dislike aluminum paint in places where it seems best to have the structural steel unobtrusive as seem to me to obtain in the case of the Chain Bridge.

Please feel free to call upon the Commission of Fine Arts at any time. I appreciate your inquiry in this instance.

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,
Chairman.

CC:AVL

EX 1217 P

C O O Y

February 17, 1936.

Dear Mr. Cammerer:

Last Sunday I had occasion to talk with Mr. Frederic A. Delano and among other things he raised the question with me concerning a possible treatment of the Great Entrance to Arlington Cemetery. For a long time Mr. Delano and I have felt that the great mass of masonry at the bottom of the hill forms a disagreeable intrusion in the view from the Memorial Bridge and from the drive approaching Arlington Mansion.

I have personally never approved of this overpowering monumental treatment and I agree with Mr. Delano's suggestion that English ivy be planted along the high walls of this "Great Entrance" so as ultimately to cover all of the masonry except the niche. It would be very helpful to plant other vines at the top of the wall so that their growth would in time break the hard, harsh architectural lines.

I have taken up this matter at a meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts today and the members concur in the above suggestion.

I hope you may be able to find funds to accomplish this.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,

Chairman.

Hon. A. B. Cammerer,
Director, National Park Service,
Interior Department,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT G

C O P Y

February 21, 1938.

Dear Mrs. Ross:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting on February 17, 1938, considered the model which you submitted for the medal to be presented to George F. Cohan. Upon the recommendation of Mr.anship, sculptor member of the Commission, the model was approved.

The model is returned to you herewith.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very respectfully, yours,

(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,

Chairman.

Hon. Nellie Tayloe Ross,
Director of the Mint,
Treasury Department,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT H

